DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 302 CG 016 896

AUTHOR Arum, Mary Louise; And Others
TITLE Experiencing Your Identity: Developmental Materials for Academic and Community Settings.
INSTITUTION Chicago State Univ., IL. Center for Woman's Identity Studies.
SPONS AGENCY Women's Educational Equity Act Program (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 103p.; Some pages may be marginally legible due to colored paper.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescent Development; Adolescents; Affective Objectives; Community Colleges; Emotional Development; Family Relationship; *Group Activities; Group Discussion; Interviews; Personal Autonomy; Personal Narratives; Resource Materials; Secondary Education; *Self Actualization; Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Identity Formation; *Life Events

ABSTRACT

This book for teachers, counselors, or group leaders, provides a set of activities through which young persons can experience issues relating to their own sense of identity. The activities are based on the life experiences of 100 adult women interviewed in 1977-78. The exercises can be used in a variety of high school, community college, or community group settings and to complement a variety of course offerings. Three types of activities are included based on three avenues of learning and experiencing. Following the introduction and explanation, the second chapter, Topics for Creative Expression, consists of materials to guide young persons in recognizing their own experiences and expressing them orally, graphically, and in writing. The participants respond to the words of women describing critical events in their lives. Activities for Group Participation includes structured activities to provide bases for clarifying what participants desire for their own lives. The final chapter, Learning From Your Experience, leads participants in interviewing each other and reviewing what they have learned. (JAC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED234302

EXPERIENCING YOUR IDENTITY

Developmental Materials for Academic and Community Settings

Mary Louise Arum, Rose L. Blouin, Donna M. Avery

Center for Woman's Identity Studies
ChicagoStateUniversity
Chicago, Illinois

Women's Educational Equity Act Program
U.S. Education Department
Terrel H. Bell, Secretary

1981

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Donna M. Avery

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG 016896

This is a field test copy. It is being distributed to a limited audience for evaluation purposes only. When approved by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program, it will be disseminated by the Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160.

Discrimination Prohibited: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or be so treated on the basis of sex under most education programs or activities receiving Federal assistance.

The activity which is the subject of this book was produced under a grant from the U.S. Education Department, under the auspices of the Women's Educational Equity Act. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

developed and produced by:
Center for Woman's Identity Studies
ChicagoStateUniversity
Chicago, Illinois

Donna M. Avery, *director*
Alexis Huffman, *assistant director*
Rose L. Blouin, *staff associate*
Catherine Harrington, *office manager*

CONTRIBUTORS

content consultation:
Donna J. Krieger
Joan L. Whipp
Marjory Nelson
James H. Andrews

design:
Rose L. Blouin, format

content review:
Alexis Huffman
Rose L. Blouin
Donna M. Avery

editorial:
Babette F. Inglehart
Rose L. Blouin

evaluation:
Elena M. Rose
Alexis Huffman

production:
Alexis Huffman
Rose L. Blouin

special credit: Donna J. Krieger for original development of exercises in Chapter Three.

Other materials being developed by the Center for Woman's Identity Studies/Chicago State University:

THE CRITICAL EVENTS INTERVIEW TRAINING MANUAL. A pre-decision making technique for counseling women. This new technique offers both client and counselor a unique approach to helping women in transition.

EN-ACT: A MODEL WORKSHOP TO ENHANCE THE BLACK WOMAN'S IDENTITY. A workshop designed by and for black women, which focuses on the historical, social, political, economic and psychological forces impacting upon the black woman's identity.

SOURCES OF GROWTH: A RESOURCEBOOK FOR COUNSELORS OF WOMEN. Describes actual issues in women's lives and identifies variables associated with growthful critical events including independence, courage and self worth. Includes implications to inform the practice of counseling with women.

CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING THE HISPANIC WOMAN'S IDENTITY. A companion study of Hispanic women of both Mexican-American and Puerto Rican descent. Includes presentation of critical events data and an analysis of the cultural forces affecting the identity of Hispanic women.

CASE STUDIES IN CRITICAL EVENTS. Contains ten case studies, drawn from the original Critical Events Interview data of white, black and Hispanic women designed to sensitize the user to the effects of both sexism and racism as they impact upon life choices.

Related material developed by the Center for Woman's Identity Studies/Chicago State University, and currently available from the Education Development Center, 55 Chapel Street, Newton, Massachusetts 02160:

CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING WOMAN'S IDENTITY: A HANDBOOK FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS. Ideal for "helping professionals"--those social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors responsible for the delivery of mental health services to women. This resource handbook provides information about those critical events in women's lives that influence the dynamics of their lives in a time of rapid social change.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

page

What This Book Is About 3
Why This Book Is Important 4
What Is In This Book 6
How To Use This Book 8

CHAPTER TWO

TOPICS FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Introduction 13
Guidelines for Use 15
Topics

#1: Relationships With Mothers 17
#2: Relationships With Fathers 18
#3: Relationships With Parents 19
#4: Relationships With Brothers and Sisters 20
#5: Special Relationships Outside Immediate Family .. 21
#6: Personal Experiences 22
#7: Personal Characteristics 23
#8: Death, Illness, Experience of Loss 24
#9: Expectations of Others 25
#10: Values and Attitudes 26

Completion Activities 27

CHAPTER THREE

ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION

page

Introduction 31

Section I - Developing Perspective

Exercise #1: As I See Myself 35
Exercise #2: As I See Relationships 39
Exercise #3: As I See Ideas 42

Section II - Doing And Being

Exercise #4: The Power Of Opinions 49
Exercise #5: Making Things Happen 53
Exercise #6: Doing What You Want To Do 55
Exercise #7: Being Different 59

Section III - Beliefs, Values and Expectations

Exercise #8: Looking At Stereotypes 63
Exercise #9: What It Means To Be Feminine and Masculine 66
Exercise #10: The Meanings of Marriage 69
Exercise #11: Great Expectations 73

CHAPTER FOUR

LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE

page

Part I: Introduction 79

Part II: Class/Group Presentation: Preparation Guidelines

What Is The Critical Events Peer Interview? 83
How To Do The Critical Events Peer Interview 84
Choosing An Event 84
What Kind Of Questions Are Asked? 84
How Is The Interview Done? 85

Directions for Speaker 85
Directions for Listener 85
Sample Interview Sheet/Explanation of Questions 86

Confidentiality 87
After The Interview 87

Part III: Doing The Interview 88

Part IV: Completion Activities 92

REFERENCES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

This book provides a set of activities through which young persons can experience issues relating to their own sense of identity. The activities draw on the critical issues and events in the lives of one hundred women, as told by them in their own words.

The activities are designed to enable young persons to:

1. Explore the meaning of events and relationships in their own lives;

2. Learn about their own past and present with a growing sense of personal history;

3. Look ahead to events that may occur in the future, through their own eyes and those of the women whose experiences they come to share; and

4. Think about goals and about strategies for achieving them, based on principles of independence and self-determination.

The book is based on the life experiences of one hundred adult women who were interviewed in 1977-78. They were asked about the experiences that they believed important in their lives. The occasion was a study of events that are critical in shaping woman's identity (Avery, 1980). The experiences of these women, white and black, of many ages and circumstances, provide an array of events, themes and perspectives from which other people, both women and men, can learn. The exercises in this book can help young persons draw on the experiences of others in order to understand themselves more fully in the present, and to strengthen their sense of competence and

identity as they move into new events and experiences in the future.

WHY THIS BOOK IS IMPORTANT

Many young adults feel that they have little control over their lives. Their thoughts of themselves are often dominated by what they see as roles and categories defined by others. They often act as if they are limited or blocked by outside forces, unable to move in directions that differ from those of their friends, neighbors or family, or even to consider moving toward new goals. Young adults are not alone; these feelings are widely shared by Twentieth Century men and women.

People have long sought answers to the question "what does it mean to know yourself?" through philosophy, religion and individual quests for personal understanding. When confused about one's own life, the question is difficult to answer without the perspective provided by time, theoretical frameworks or ideologies.

The perspectives of the Western world have often directed our attention to what can be observed -- behavior and circumstances -- rather than toward an inner sense of truth and the meaning of personal experiences. In the 1970's, sometimes called the "me" decade, there was a renewed interest in discovering individual awareness. The 1980's may well see an expansion of personal awareness to include collective identity issues relating to family, community, ethnic group, nation and world.

In our time it is easy to see the confusion and frustration of people who view themselves only in terms of their roles, their circumstances and their possessions. The more limited the view we hold of ourselves, the more powerless and the less satisfied we are with our lives. Conversely, if we hold a broader, more comprehensive view of

ourselves, we feel stronger and our lives are more rewarding. When lifestyles, roles and relationships are as varied and changing as they are today, a firm sense of identity is essential.

Identity is the state or fact of remaining the same under varying conditions or from different aspects. It is the condition of being oneself and not another. We use the concepts of time, space and events to provide a framework for looking at our experience of who we are.

Yet identity is more pervasive and powerful than a person can understand from the totality of experience. Experience alone does not change a person's identity. We expand and deepen our sense of who we are, what we can do and the possibilities that are open to us as we reflect on our experiences. In this way, as individuals, we complete and integrate the events of our past. Identity formation becomes a lifetime process and an awareness of how the process works magnifies and enriches the quality of our lives.

When we operate from a sense of who we are rather than as victims of circumstance, we can make choices that are more meaningful. We can choose more actively the qualities and activities of our lives, feeling less limited by the "shoulds" and "oughts" of other people. Most important, as we choose we see that particular qualities, activities and roles are rarely satisfying in themselves. What counts is our knowledge that we can make choices.

Seen in this light, the early experiences of adult women provide points of comparison and identification for today's young people. The stereotypes and expectations that these women encountered can be especially illuminating, not only for young women but young men as well. By reflecting on their own lives, young persons can begin to realize that life is not predetermined, that they can choose to act in a number of ways.

The activities suggested here can help individuals look clearly at their lives, their environment, their relationships with others. Rather than blaming circumstances or

parents for who they are, young people can consider what they can do to make their lives what they want them to be. By doing so, they can see who they are and what can be learned from events and experiences of their lives. Learning to experience more fully one's own identity enhances the sense of power a person feels over life and the sense of trust in his or her ability to survive and grow from events to come. Such learning provides a guiding North Star for the often uncharted waters of Twentieth Century life.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

This book provides materials and instructions to guide a classroom teacher, counselor, group leader or facilitator. The exercises can be used in a variety of high school and community college courses. They are also suitable for use in community settings such as Scout groups, religious organizations and YWCA and YMCA groups.

Three types of activities are included, based on three avenues of learning and experiencing. All are designed to help a person experience "who I am" in a new and meaningful way.

Chapter Two is "TOPICS FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSION." It consists of material to guide young persons in recognizing some of their own experiences and to stimulate written, oral and graphic expression of them. Participants respond to the words of women describing the critical events in their lives.

A third chapter includes structured activities to enable a person to look at the self in terms of his or her own actions, beliefs and relationships, and those of

others. This set of exercises is entitled "ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION." They can provide bases for clarifying what participants desire for their own lives and for setting goals.

The fourth chapter is called "LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE." In this activity, one participant interviews another. They share what they have learned about their personal history, ability to cope with problems, personal strengths and sources of support in their lives. The interview provides a framework for looking at experiences in a way that gives participants a sense of who they are and a sense of power in their ability to deal with and learn from future events.

Chapter Four, and the others as well, can be used to compare one's own identity to the collective identity of the group and the society, now and at other points in history. Some additional activities are suggested for creating a context for looking at identity issues through the individual, personal relationships, the group, the society and the world.

The issues and some of the methods of this book are based on interviews of one hundred women concerning events they considered important in their views of themselves. The women who volunteered to talk about their lives were asked to describe various aspects of their experience: feelings, thoughts, behavior, coping strategies, ideologies, views of self and world, and resolution of the events they described. The result was the identification of different types of critical events, styles of dealing with them and changes that followed.

Although the interview questions were simple, they elicited rich stories of individual lives. Moreover, the experience of the interview proved to be a powerful one for those who participated. The opportunity for a person to share an experience not only validates his or her sense of "who I am"; it also provides insights for other people and often helps them validate their sense of self as well.

The issues presented here draw on a body of material covering over six hundred critical

life events. The events and experiences of the first twenty years of life were extracted and examined for their relevance to the lives of young persons today. Direct quotations from the women interviewed are used in Chapter Two to stimulate creative expression. The events and issues on which the activities of Chapter Three focus were derived from the interview material.

Chapter Four brings these together in the Critical Events Peer Interview. This is a modified version of the original procedure, designed so that young persons can experience the power of the knowledge of their own lives that occurred in the original interviews. In those interviews, each woman decided what to tell the interviewer. She learned about herself, realizing that she was larger than the events she described. Her identity became clearer during and after those important events. It became even stronger and more vivid after the experience of the interview. The Critical Events Peer Interview is designed to provide a similar experience as the culmination of these activities for young persons.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is for use by teachers and other leaders of groups of young persons. The activities may be undertaken by young women, young men and groups including both. Virtually all of the activities can be used in a variety of situations; teachers and other leaders will probably find applications not anticipated here.

The material was developed from an interdisciplinary perspective. It may be used in courses or units in social studies, history, sociology, psychology, sex education, speech, drama, English, reading and art. Teachers of writing skills and oral expression may find Chapter Two -- "TOPICS FOR CREATIVE EXPRESSION" -- most useful. Social

studies, history, psychology and drama may be the context for using the interview of Chapter Four, "LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE," or some of the exercises in Chapter Three, "ACTIVITIES FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION."

Art teachers may use the quotations in Chapter Two or interview material in Chapter Four to stimulate drawing, sculpture, or other expressions of "who I am." History teachers may want to use the interview of Chapter Four as an introduction to oral history. The interdisciplinary character of the activities makes them appropriate for schools and groups currently involved in programs where material is exchanged across disciplines and where efforts to integrate material are being made.

Because this book may be used in various settings, the term "leader" is used to designate the person responsible for presenting, implementing and completing each activity.

"Participant" identifies the individual or group member responsible for undertaking the activities and learning about herself or himself. Each section includes guidelines for the leader and directions for participants.

A special effort has been made to present material about the individual sense of self so that it is not tied to one sex or the other. The concept of identity encompasses those aspects that serve to clarify a person's unique, personal, inner experiences; it is not limited to personality, physical being, or sex role expectations. The leader may want to change the gender of words used in any of the activities to one more appropriate to the group and the particular goal sought.

The leader can decide which chapter and activities are appropriate for each situation and participants. For example, Chapter Two may be used for individual assignments, which then become the bases for group discussion. Chapter Three was developed for use in small groups. The Critical Events Peer Interview of Chapter Four can be used in groups of two, half a dozen, or larger groups.

The purpose, content and nature of the activities vary as outlined above. It is recommended that you use several parts in order to reinforce the perspective that the participants will develop on "who I am." However, each chapter represents a distinct activity or activities in its own right and can be used alone.

This book does not predict how young persons will respond to these activities. Some may believe that the experiences of adult women are not relevant to their generation, or to young men. Others may not see any important events in their own lives. Participants must deal with the issues of identity in their own terms and consider the benefits of self awareness in their own lives.

CHAPTER TWO

Topics for Creative Expression

INTRODUCTION

When asked to write or speak about themselves and their experiences, high school students and young adults frequently complain that they have nothing to write about or have difficulty thinking of ideas. Teachers often hear such statements as "Nothing important has ever happened to me," or "I can't think of anything to say."

Teachers and others who work with young persons also feel that there is a scarcity of materials available to stimulate students' ideas for writing assignments. And while topics that require students to reflect upon their own lives and experiences would appear to be ideal, the student often finds it difficult to generate ideas or themes to explore.

Recognizing that writing and speaking about critical or important personal events can be both a valuable step in the process of self-awareness as well as a useful way to stimulate ideas for self expression, this chapter offers a means of facilitating individual expression of personal experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to not only provide topics and ideas for written and oral expression, but to do so in a way that facilitates the participants' understanding and exploration of important events in their own lives and the lives of others.

Each page of this chapter presents a different topic, theme suggestions relative to the topic, and ideas for developing those themes. A variety of topics is presented including family and other relationships, personal experiences, attitudes, values and expectations.

The topics and ideas suggested on the following pages have been extracted from interviews with adult women living today. In the interviews, the women described the important turning points in their lives. Interview material relating to early life experiences was selected for the development of this chapter. All of the theme development ideas are quotations, that is, actual statements made by the women concerning critical events which occurred during ealier times in their lives.

In working with these quotations, young people are provided with topics and ideas for self expression based on experiences common to persons of their age group from previous generations. Participants may begin to explore more fully the important events in their own lives, and their feelings, thoughts and actions accompanying these experiences. Others may begin a process of self-awareness which can become a positive step in their growth and development. Finally, it will be interesting for students to learn that, what is important to them now was similarly important to young people of their parents' generation.

This chapter may be utilized in any discipline or setting which requires oral or written expression. The topics and ideas can be both educational and stimulating, particularly in English, Creative Writing, Speech and Drama classes. This material may be equally appropriate for use with community youth groups.

GUIDELINES FOR USE

Whether your group is in an academic or other kind of setting, teachers and facilitators can make some independent decisions regarding how they wish to use this material with each group. The following guidelines and suggestions have been developed in order to enhance maximum benefit from use of these materials.

Teachers or group leaders may assign topics or present several topics and themes for participants to consider. Topics may be duplicated individually or in sets as a handout to group members. Another idea is to duplicate sets of quotations, cut them apart and distribute one to each member of the group as her/his assignment.

Once each participant has been assigned or chosen a topic, she/he can decide which theme, relevant to the topic, they wish to develop. Participants may develop their oral or written assignment either from personal experiences, or based on the ideas presented with each topic and theme.

Have the participants decide how they wish to develop their essays or speeches. Some may wish to narrate an event in their lives and then discuss the impact the event has had on them. Some may wish to describe an important person in their lives, or express an opinion. Whatever the approach, encourage participants to develop their own material around <u>one</u> controlling idea. Many of the quotations suggest such an idea, e.g., "In my early years, my father had a tremendous influence on me"; "I tried to do things to please my father"

or "The first room of my own was so important to me."

Encourage participants to think about their attitudes or feelings regarding the subject matter. The tone should be clear from the beginning and consistent throughout the essay or speech. For example, a participant might decide to express amusement, anger, frustration or joy toward a particular subject. Taking some time to think about the subject first can generate additional ideas for the assignment. Encourage participants to develop their ideas with concrete details such as examples, anecdotes, dialogue, vivid descriptions of scenes, flashbacks, etc., avoiding vague abstractions and generalizations.

The quotations are intended to be used primarily for generating the participant's own ideas for written and oral expression. Encourage the group to explore their own experiences and their understandings of them. Feel free to change gender or any other details in the quotations to fit the participants' own experiences.

After the group has completed at least one writing or oral assignment based on the quotations presented, you might ask them to develop their own quotations or statements which express how high school students and young adults view themselves, their attitudes and expectations and their relationships.

TOPIC #1: RELATIONSHIPS WITH MOTHERS

THEMES:

A. Discuss who you are in relation to your mother. What kind of person is she? What kind of person are you?

B. Discuss an experience with your mother and its impact on you and on her.

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning their relationships with their mothers.

IDEAS:

1. "I never felt it was necessary to rebel against my mother's influence."

2. "Around 15, it seemed like a constant battle with mother about curfews, time to be in from dates and riding in cars with boys."

3. "My mother is very beautiful. I feel I'm not as attractive as she is."

4. "Mother encouraged me to grow up and get married and have a husband to take care of me."

5. "I remember resenting my mother's dependence on me. She seemed to live vicariously through me." (She seemed to live my life.)

6. "Mother told me 'No matter what you do or who you marry, never depend on your husband. Always be able to take care of yourself.'"

TOPIC #2: RELATIONSHIPS WITH FATHERS

THEMES:

A. Discuss who you are in relation to your father. What kind of a person is he? What kind of person are you?

B. Discuss an experience with your father and its impact on you and on him.

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning their relationships with their fathers.

IDEAS:

1. "I have pleasant memories of doing things with my father, things he might have done with sons; things my sisters didn't get to do."

2. "I tried to do things to please my father."

3. "In my early years, my father had a tremendous influence on me."

4. "In our house, dad was strong and forceful, could always be depended on to be there."

5. "My relationship with my father was a constant state of rebellion against his stereotype of what girls should do."

6. "My father encouraged me to do things and never discouraged me just because I was a girl."

TOPIC #3: RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

THEMES:

A. What are some decisions you've made or attitudes you have about your parents which have influenced your relationship with them?

B. What have you learned about yourself or relationships from your experience with your parents?

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning their relationships with their parents.

IDEAS:

1. "It seems to me that my parents and I are just going in different directions."

2. "I felt resentful that my parents felt I owed them something because they brought me into this world."

3. "My parents gave me very subtle messages."

4. "Both of my parents are strong in different ways."

5. "Mom works days and Dad works nights. He cooks and does some of the same things she does in our home."

TOPIC #4: RELATIONSHIPS WITH BROTHERS AND SISTERS

THEMES:

A. Discuss the relationship you have had with a brother or sister and what impact that relationship has had on your own life.

B. If you do not have a brother or sister, discuss your attitude about not having this kind of relationship in your family.

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning their relationships with their sisters.

IDEAS:

1. "While growing up, my sister was obviously the favorite. People always catered to her more."

2. "My younger sister has always been smarter than me."

3. "The emphasis in my family was on my older sister."

TOPIC #5: SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

THEMES:

A. Explain how a person outside your immediate family has played an important role in your life. What has this person shown you about yourself, another person, or life in general?

B. What makes this relationship "special?"

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning special relationships outside their immediate families.

IDEAS:

1. "My grandmother raised me." "I believe an important influence on me (on my development) was my grandmother. She always inspired me."

2. "I met a friend at school. She was from an affluent background. She was strong and I admired her. I found out later that she admired me. She helped me to be a stronger person and to feel that there is nothing I can't do."

3. "One of my teachers influenced me a lot. She was strong willed and didn't let others frighten her. She encouraged her students to do the same."

4. "I know my friend cares about me. I can talk over problems with her and she understands because she has gone through the same things."

5. "He lives in my head. He encouraged me to be a person. He made me 'wake up.'"

TOPIC #6: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

THEMES:

A. Explain how a single experience or set of experiences has taught you something about life in general.

B. Discuss any "first," any achievement or embarrassing moment; involvement in sports or other extracurricular activities, or experiences on a job or a trip.

Opposite are some quotations from women about personal experiences in their lives.

IDEAS:

1. "When we moved, at first I was excited about a new start. Then I felt alone, unsure and lacked self-confidence."

2. "Talking to a teacher at school, I just froze. I couldn't talk."

3. "Wow, what a shining moment!"

4. "When I went away I was homesick for the very family that I wanted to get away from."

5. "I felt embarrassed by my mother's public putdown of me."

6. "The first room of my own was so important to me."

7. "Camping experiences during summers gave me some competency and skills that helped me and others see me as more than just a little girl."

TOPIC #7: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

THEMES:

A. Discuss one of your unique characteristics. This may be something about your appearance, your personality, your way of doing things of which you or others have expressed approval or disapproval.

B. Discuss some characteristic of yourself that you do not like and how it influences your relationships with others, or how you feel about yourself.

Opposite are some quotations from women about their unique characteristics and/or characteristics about themselves which they themselves or other people did not seem to like.

IDEAS:

1. "I have always had a terrible inferiority complex because of my dark complexion."

2. "In school I have a friend and others who teased me and called me weird because I always studied."

3. "I think there was shame attached to the circumstances of the racial mixture of my grandmother."

4. "I am the oldest of a family of girls that wanted a boy. I was raised like a boy."

5. "I felt that if I was really myself, I wouldn't be liked; so I tried to be like the kids who were popular."

TOPIC #8: DEATH, ILLNESS, EXPERIENCE OF LOSS

THEMES:

Discuss how an experience with death, illness, loss or change has had an impact on you. (Some additional ideas: parents' divorce, moving, loss of a friend, a changed relationship.)

What did you learn about yourself? Did you recognize any personal strengths or weaknesses you had not been aware of before this experience?

Opposite are some quotations from women about death, illness and/or experiences of loss in their lives.

IDEAS:

1. "The death of my parents had a terrible impact on my life."

2. "One day I came home from school and my favorite dog was no longer there."

3. "As a child, my sister was very ill."

4. "When my father died, he asked me to take care of mother."

5. "As a child, I was very ill."

TOPIC #9: EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS

THEMES:

A. Trace some of your most pronounced attitudes or expectations which you feel may have been influenced by your family, relatives or environment.

B. Indicate to what extent you find yourself similar or different from your predecessors and why you believe this is so.

Opposite are some quotations from women concerning their attitudes and expectations in relation to the attitudes or expectations of other people in their lives.

IDEAS:

1. "I may have been different if I had been able to talk to my parents about sex." "Sex was a hush-hush topic in our house."

2. "My parents raised all of us to believe in ourselves. I never look at things as to whether a man or woman could do them. It never occurs to me that I have limitations."

3. "I want to get away from all the home town expectations."

4. "I never understood why being in (back home) by 10 p.m. makes a person 'nice' and being in by 12 midnight makes you 'bad.'"

5. "I always knew I'd get married and always thought I'd be a mother."

6. "As a child, I saw myself as a tomboy, yet I used to love dolls."

TOPIC #10: VALUES AND ATTITUDES

THEMES:

A. Discuss one of your values or attitudes and why it is so important to you.

B. Discuss how a particular value or attitude affects what you believe you can do, be or have.

Opposite are some quotations from women about their values and attitudes.

IDEAS:

1. "I have always been conscious of differences in people."

2. "In school, I got in trouble almost every other day for challenging things I thought were unfair."

3. "I want fun in addition to studies."

4. "I never wanted to be a leader."

5. "Don't ever allow yourself to love too deeply or you'll be hurt."

6. "I am learning to ask for what I want."

7. "I am continuing to change and grow and to know myself better."

COMPLETION ACTIVITIES

Completion activities for this chapter encompass group discussions of the experience of self expression and the exploration of important personal events. After one or more written or oral assignments have been completed by the group, it is suggested that you spend some time discussing their experience of responding to the topics, themes and quotations presented. If the group is not accustomed to sharing what they have written, it might be helpful if the teacher/facilitator first shared with them what these quotations brought into her/his awareness about young adulthood, relationships and values.

It is also recommended that some distinction be made between sharing the content of the assignments and sharing what participants have learned about themselves from the process of writing in response to the quotations presented. The group may choose to discuss various aspects of the important events in their lives, such as feelings, thoughts and actions associated with these events. Participants might talk about how they approached the assignment as well as any personal issues which may have surfaced while reflecting on these topics and themes.

The following are some issues you might want to discuss with the group as a way of completing this activity:

1. How easy was it to pick a topic? What are some of the thoughts and feelings that arose in beginning the assignment?

2. Were you able to relate to the quotations (ideas) that were suggested? Could you see how your experiences are similar? Different?

3. Can you make any general remarks about how these women may have felt about their families or about being women? How does their view of themselves, their relationships and experiences differ from your view?

4. What did you learn about yourself, your relationships, and your values from doing this assignment?

5. What else would you like to know about the experiences of these women?

6. How could you take a closer look at your own behavior and feelings, values and expectations in your relationships with others?

7. What did you learn about the experience of young adulthood and/or others' views of people, relationships and values?

CHAPTER THREE

Activities for Group Participation

INTRODUCTION

The materials in this chapter are designed to provide an alternative method by which participants can learn more about themselves and their relation to the world around them. Primarily, the exercises offer young persons an opportunity to examine personal issues such as ideas, relationships, beliefs and values. And secondly, they enable participants to think about life goals and strategies for their achievement based on principles of independence and self determination. Essentially, this material provides the occasion for the exploration of issues likely to affect young persons in their future lives.

The activities presented in this chapter employ a variety of group/classroom learning techniques, and each exercise focuses on a relevant aspect of participants' lives. These exercises can be used in sequence or in combination, in small or large groups, and in single-sex or mixed groups, whatever seems appropriate or most stimulating.

This chapter is divided into three sections: 1) Developing Perspective, 2) Doing and Being and 3) Beliefs, Values and Expectations. The exercises in each section are based on these corresponding themes. The basic format for each exercise includes one or more activities, guidelines for the teacher/facilitator, directions for participants when necessary, and suggestions for completion activities. Teachers and others who use this material may want to make some decisions regarding appropriate sequences or complimentary exercises for their group after making an initial review of all the exercises and activities.

The exercises requiring written responses include sample diagrams which the teacher/facilitator may reproduce as a board diagram. In other instances, sample worksheets have been provided which can be duplicated as a handout for participants. Suggestions regarding preparation of materials are included in each exercise where necessary.

In working with these materials, teachers and other group leaders have available a creative approach to stimulating activities for young persons. Facilitators may find these exercises particularly useful in Social Studies and Human Relations classes, as well as any setting which explores self development, relationships and life planning strategies.

SECTION I

DEVELOPING PERSPECTIVE

EXERCISE 1: AS I SEE MYSELF

PART I

GUIDELINES: Discuss with participants the concepts of the "ideal self" (the person I want to be, the fulfillment of all my hopes and dreams, the great person I imagine) and the "growing self" (the everyday me, the struggles, weaknesses and strengths I recognize in myself now.) The following two pages may be duplicated as worksheets for this activity and for Part 2.

(As I See Myself Worksheet)

DIRECTIONS: Take time to list privately, all the glowing characteristics (adjectives) of the "ideal self" on the left side of a sheet of paper. Use the worksheet if your leader has provided one. On the right side, list the qualities of the "growing" real self. This can be done by completing the statements "I am..." and "I want to be...."

PART II

GUIDELINES: Explain that one way we come to know ourselves is by expressing the dimensions of our personhood in written or spoken words, song or art. The statements which participants will complete for this part will be a written expression of some of those dimensions.

(Completion Statements Worksheet)

DIRECTIONS: Write down your responses to the "As I See Myself Completion Statements" on the worksheet your leader has provided. Try not to spend too much time thinking about your response. Just write down the first thought that comes to mind.

AS I SEE MYSELF

MY IDEAL SELF

"I want to be..."

MY GROWING SELF

"I am..."

43

AS I SEE MYSELF COMPLETION STATEMENTS

1. I feel challenged when...

2. I feel on top of the world when...

3. I know I am doing the right thing for me when I...

4. I feel pulled apart when...

5. I feel fantastic about myself when...

6. I was more sure of myself when (cite an event or realization in your life)...

7. I like to be in control when...

8. I like another girl or boy to be in control when...

9. When a good looking girl or boy shows interest in me, I...

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: Ask participants to reread their responses to the Completion Statements.
(A)

DIRECTIONS: As you look over your responses to the Completion Statements, consider the following questions:

1. What new information have you realized about yourself?

(Completion Statements Worksheet)

2. Do the descriptive words you listed in the "growing self" column (As I See Myself Worksheet) reflect this new information?

List any additional descriptive words you've thought of, in the "growing self" column.

(As I See Myself Worksheet)

Circle those qualities or adjectives from the "growing self" column which you would like to include in the "ideal self" column.

GUIDELINES: Ask participants to share what they learned about themselves in a group discussion.
(B)

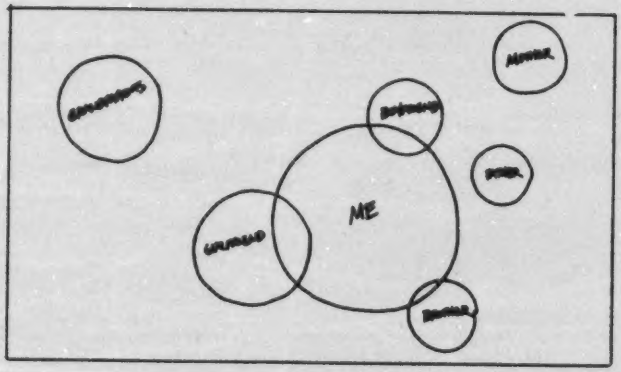
Suggest that participants say to themselves "I am..." filling in the qualities listed under "ideal self." Encourage participants to think about how they can become the "ideal self."

Finally, discuss with your group the statement: "In order to understand who you are, one needs to realize that both the 'growing self' and the 'ideal self' are part of you."

EXERCISE 2: AS I SEE RELATIONSHIPS

PART I

GUIDELINES: Direct each participant to draw circles representing him/herself and five other people of importance on a sheet of paper. The diagram below may be drawn on the board for participants to follow.



DIRECTIONS: Draw a large circle representing yourself in the center of a sheet of paper. Then, choose five people who are very important to you at this time in your life. Following the diagram your group leader has provided, show the relationships of these people to you by arranging circles, representing each person, around the circle representing yourself. The placement of these circles will indicate the closeness or distance in your relationship with that person.

PART II

GUIDELINES: Have participants complete the statements on the following page, which may be duplicated as a handout. Completing these statements will indicate more about how participants see themselves in relationships.

AS I SEE RELATIONSHIPS COMPLETION STATEMENTS

1. When I think_____(person's name) is judging me:

   I feel...

   I think...

   I react to that person by...

2. When my family (or friends, brother, neighbor) doesn't seem to like me:

   I want to...

   I feel...

   I think I can...

3. I want the best for any children I might have:

   I want them to have...

   I want them to be...

   I want them to do...

4. My mother is_____toward people.

   Some flaws my mother has which I don't want as mine are...

   Some good qualities my mother has and which I hope to have are...

5. I changed through my relationship with a teacher because...

   She/he helps me by...

6. My best friend is (describe)...

7. My mother thinks fun is...

   My father thinks fun is...

8. During my childhood:

   My sister/brother was...

   My family treated her/him...

   In terms of my brother/sister, people always...

9. When I'm with my boyfriend/girlfriend, I...

10. My grandparents think I should...

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES (A): The leader might represent any person mentioned in the statements: mother, father, sister, brother, boyfriend, girlfriend, grandparents, etc. Any group member might represent the above characters rather than the group leader. If participants find it difficult to share aloud, some alternatives you might suggest are: volunteer speaking, written response or one-to-one communication.

DIRECTIONS: Based on your present feelings, what do you want to say to that person right now? Say it.

GUIDELINES (B): Referring to the relationship circles done earlier (Part I), ask participants if they would now like to change the positions of any of the circles. How might they be changed to reflect any new decisions made about these relationships?

EXERCISE 3: AS I SEE IDEAS

PART I

GUIDELINES (A): Explore through discussion how ideas or opinions begin and how they grow. For example, a discussion could be based on the issue of women's rights, including ideas about working mothers, men and women sharing housework, women in politics, etc. any issue of current interest may be explored in terms of how ideas originate and develop.

DIRECTIONS: As a group, discuss the sources of your ideas and opinions. You may choose to discuss individual ideas, or ideas and opinions which are shared by many members of the group.

GUIDELINES (B): Have participants, either individually or collectively, draw out diagrams which list their sources of ideas and opinions, as they are generated around one central issue. You may reproduce the example below as a board diagram to show participants how this activity is done.

Sources of my ideas about women's rights
parents church older sister media friends teacher

DIRECTIONS: Make an extensive list of sources of ideas, using the example given by your group leader. Try to include unlikely places or people and unusual experiences or occasions. Each list should focus on only one central issue.

PART II

GUIDELINES (A): Have participants write their responses to the completion statements on the next page. These statements may be written on the board, read to the group or duplicated for handout.

(As I See Ideas Completion Statements)

DIRECTIONS: Write your responses to the Completion Statements provided by your group leader. Don't spend a lot of time thinking of responses, but try to stick with the first response that occurs to you.

GUIDELINES (B): Divide participants into groups of five or six. Have the group discuss each of the statements and their individual responses. Each group should then discuss the questions below.

DIRECTIONS: In your group, discuss each of the statements as well as your individual responses. After this discussion, each member of your group should respond to the following questions:

1. What did you think about the statements? About your responses?

2. Have you ever thought about any of these issues before?

3. Were your responses similar to those of the rest of the group? Why do you think they were or weren't?

AS I SEE IDEAS COMPLETION STATEMENTS

1. I would like to be the kind of mother (father) who...

2. "I found out when I was about twelve years old that I couldn't have children." If this were true for me, I would...

3. I have trouble saying "no" to...

   I have trouble saying "no" when...

   Saying "no" is appropriate for me when...

4. You're a boy (girl); you can't...

5. The topic of sex in our house is...

6. Thinking of getting away from home makes me...

7. The people in my neighborhood have certain expectations about girls (boys):

   They think that boys should...

   They think that girls should...

8. My dad says (or implied) "No son (daughter) of mine will "

9. My mother says (or implied) "No daughter (son) of mine will..."

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: Completion activities should focus on what was learned about how ideas originate and develop.

Have a total group discussion of the statements and the responses which were given most often. Focus on the major issues and ideas which have developed, and talk about how or where some of these ideas may have originated and developed. You may also enlarge discussion of any issues or ideas which surfaced as a major concern for the group.

Small groups of participants may write or discuss their responses to the questions listed below.

DIRECTIONS: Participate in class discussion as directed by your group leader.

Write or discuss your responses to the following statements as instructed:

- I learned that...
- I was surprised that...
- I realized that...
- I discovered that...
- I was pleased that...
- I was displeased that...

SECTION II

DOING AND BEING

EXERCISE 4: THE POWER OF OPINIONS

GUIDELINES (A): The activities in this exercise are based on the following statements which can be written on the blackboard. (NOTE: These statements will also be used for EXERCISE 5: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN.)

1. "Girls don't need to prepare for careers. They just get married, have children and stay at home anyway."

   Characters: mother, father, daughter, employer, career counselor, boyfriend.

2. "Girls shouldn't try to be doctors, pilots or repairpersons. They should stick to being nurses, stewardesses and sales clerks."

   Characters: mother, father, daughter, boyfriend, career counselor, male and female doctor or male/female repairperson and sales clerk.

3. "Women don't need to make as much money as men. They don't have families to support."

   Characters: mother, father, daughter, employer, boyfriend; OR: husband, wife (or single parent), employer, bill collector.

Have the group choose one statement to work with. Explain the activities in this exercise and then divide participants into small groups. Each group should choose one character, whose opinions and ideas they will develop, and one person from the group to represent that character in the panel presentation.

DIRECTIONS: Brainstorm for about 10 minutes any ideas and opinions your participant can use in reacting to the statement chosen. Brainstorming is a process during which everyone in the group can contribute ideas -- whatever one thinks of spontaneously. All the ideas are written down, without regard to how "good" or "bad" someone thinks an idea is.

After the brainstorming session, select those ideas or opinions the group thinks are best, and one person from the group to represent the character.

GUIDELINES (B): The chosen participants "role play" the characters in a panel presentation. Each person has 3-5 minutes to present his/her character's opinions.

GUIDELINES (C): Following the panel presentation will be a group discussion which includes participants' reaction to the presentation. Participants should make a list of the different opinions and ideas presented. (NOTE: This list will also be used for EXERCISE 5: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN).

Individual responses from the larger group should cover the following points:

1. Which character was most believable? Why?

2. Which of the opinions have you heard before? From whom?

3. Do you agree with the views presented by the central character? If not, how would you have responded?

4. What assumptions about women are "hidden" either in the original statement on the board or in the opinions presented by the panel?

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES (A): Have participants select someone they know who might have made the statement on the board. Ask participants to discuss how they might respond, or how they might feel about hearing the statement even though choosing not to respond to it verbally.

GUIDELINES (B): Discuss the various kinds or forms of response.

1. Verbal response: Can be either thoughts or feelings or a combination of both. Point out the difference between responding in the following two ways:

   a. "I think you... (are trying to run my life, aren't concerned about what I want, don't listen to my opinions, etc.)."

   b. "That makes me feel... (terrible, happy, angry, confused, etc.)."

   Point out the difference between responses based on how one feels, what a person thinks, and how someone might act in response to a statement or opinion. These are very different kinds of responses, and can elicit very different reactions in the person to whom they are spoken

2. Non-verbal response: Emotions like happiness, anger, frustration, confusion, etc. can be expressed in many different ways: by tears, stomach tightening, jaw clenching, smiles or eyes brightening. Or they can be seen in a body movement, sometimes subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle. An example of the latter might be punching a wall in anger or hitting someone. A subtle body response might be turning your back on someone, folding your arms, or "tuning out" that person. What are some other physical responses? What other kinds of emotional expression can be exhibited by someone who may not have said a word?

GUIDELINES: (C) Discuss with participants what they've learned about the power of opinions. Have them discuss an opinion of theirs or their family, and how that opinion might be limiting or enhancing in regards to planning for the future.

EXERCISE 5: MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

PART I

GUIDELINES: (A) Part I of this exercise is based on the statements and lists of opinions and ideas developed in EXERCISE 4: THE POWER OF OPINIONS. After completion of Exercise 4, have participants refer to the statements listed in Guidelines (A), and/or the lists of opinions they have compiled in Guidelines (C). Discuss possible sources of these opinions with the group. For instance, using the statement "Girls don't need to prepare for careers; they just get married, have children and stay at home anyway." -- possible sources of this opinion would be fathers, mothers, grandparents, employers and career counselors.

Instruct participants to choose a statement or opinion from the list(s), and then write down possible sources of these opinions. (As an alternative, the leader might choose one statement/opinion and have participants discuss and list sources of this opinion as a group.)

GUIDELINES: (B) Now have the group discuss ways of dealing with the sources listed, in order to initiate change. Your group will want to consider the following questions:

1. Do you think this person would be likely to change this opinion? If so, under what circumstances? If not, why?

2. How can you influence this person to change this opinion?

3. What can you do if the person doesn't change this opinion? Discuss possible alternative plans.

PART II

GUIDELINES: Proceed with a consideration of how change can be made to happen. For example, an employer in a fast food restaurant promotes and gives raises more readily to male employees than to female employees. Change can be initiated by some of the female employees in the following ways:

1. Talk with the manager-employer.

2. Inform the district office of this manager's policies through phone calls and/or letters.

3. Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper to inform the local community.

4. Inform city equal opportunity agencies of the restrictive policies.

5. Write to a radio or television station which provides an action-line format on it's news show.

The group can list and discuss other possible strategies using this example, or formulate strategies using other examples.

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: Direct a group discussion based on the following:

1. Do you know any people who have acted to effect change? Who are they? Talk to them about what they have done.

2. Consider any aspect of your own life which you want to change. What specific actions can you take to make your life the way you want it to be? What are the limitations of these actions?

3. Use this information to set goals for yourself or for your group to start effecting change.

EXERCISE 6: DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

PART I

GUIDELINES: Direct some time for thinking related to the statement "I can do anything I want to do in life." As a guide for participants, have them relax and suggest: "Imagine that you are doing what you want to do, that you have what you want, that you are with the people you choose, creating what you want to create, are looking the way you want to look, using time the way you choose to use it." Allow plenty of time for this activity.

Next, instruct participants to close their eyes while you read each statement below, pausing between each one. Have participants think about how they might answer each question as you pause.

1. What information do you need to attain your goal?
2. Where can you get it?
3. With whom can you talk, casually, without pressure?
4. With whom else can you talk, even if it requires courage?
5. Do you need special training? Who or what can provide it? Who are the best people from whom you can learn? How can you get to them?

You might conclude this activity with a brief discussion of whether it is easy to answer these questions, and the necessity for having a plan to enable one to do what he/she wants to do in life.

PART II

GUIDELINES: (A) As the leader, present a simulated dialogue that expresses something which you want to do in life. This will serve as an example for the participants. The dialogue occurs within yourself and is expressed aloud as a "play" between your "self 1" and "self 2." "Self 1" presents your goals and aspirations, while "self 2" raises the real and perceived limitations to your ideas. Use two chairs facing each other as you speak each "self's" part, changing chairs to show the transition. Group members should be able to identify the real and perceived limitations in what your dialogue says you want to do. The following is an example that can be used as is, or adapted to someting which the leader wants to accomplish in life.

Sample dialogue for leader: "I want to own a craft store, create and sell the projects, give lessons and make this my new job."

SIMULATED DIALOGUE

SELF 1	SELF 2
* Owning a business of my own would be so exciting and creative!	* Sounds simple. But where is this fine storefront? Do you know how much rent you'd have to pay? And the money you'd need to stock a store?
* I could get some help from a bank, a loan for stock. And there are real estate brokers to help me find a place to rent.	* Find a place to rent? Great! What if it's in a place where people hate crafts. You won't have any customers.
* I would be so much more relaxed and happy earning a living with a hobby, with something I enjoy so much.	* Who says you'd even earn a living? What if you don't make enough to pay the rent? To pay off the loan? How could you live with the risk of no salary?

* I think it would be a good business. People like the things I make. The income wouldn't be a fixed amount, but I'm sure there would be income.

* There'll always be people who want to learn. Even if I didn't sell many finished pieces, I would give lessons and sell stock.

* I can change at the time just like I change now. I'm intelligent and resourceful...

* And what do you do when people have had enough of crafts?

* With the economy the way it is, who will be able to afford the luxury of craft lessons? What if that source of income dries up, too?

* Enough to talk to myself and others again and find new ways appropriate for new times.

GUIDELINES (B): After the simulated dialogue, question group members about their perceptions of what they have seen and heard.

1. What are the real limitations to this plan of opening a small business?

2. Which limitations are perceived, imagined or assumed?

3. What steps would you advise a person with a similar dilemma to take?

4. Have you ever been so afraid of something that you did nothing about it?

GUIDELINES (C): Direct group members to prepare a dialogue, in writing, between "self 1" and "self 2," on the topic "Something I want to do in life." Participants may do this individually or in pairs, taking turns presenting each individual's dialogue. If the pairing method is used, instruct each participant to prepare dialogue for "self 1" and "self 2" and have his/her partner act of "self 2." Depending on the time available, have any or all of the participants present their dialogues, using the two chairs to show the change between "self 1" and "self 2." After each dialogue, other group members answer questions (Part II/B) about what they have seen and heard. It is not necessary for the group to solve the dilemma or to tell the person how to get what he/she wants.

DIRECTIONS: Prepare a dialogue like the one your group leader presented which expresses something you want to do in life, as well as the real or perceived limitations which might influence your plans. Present your dialogue to the group, using the chairs for the roles of "self 1" and "self 2."

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: This will be a discussion of personal goal setting regarding "what I want to do." Explain that goal setting is one way to help us plan for what we want. Ask the participants to set some mini-goals to help them do what they want to do. To assist them, you may want to take the participants through a guided fantasy.

DIRECTIONS: Close your eyes--see yourself doing what you want to do. Say to yourself, I want to...

To accomplish this, my goal for tomorrow is...

My goal 1 week from now is...
1 month from now is...
3 months from now is...
6 months from now is...
1 year from now is...

Immediately upon opening eyes, participants should begin to write down their goals with no talking. Talking tends to interrupt the memory of the fantasy.

Have participants examine any limitations they have considered in relation to the goals they have written.

EXERCISE 7: BEING DIFFERENT

A. DEFINING: Discuss with the group what it means to be different in some way from others. (You may choose to substitute the word "minority" for "being different" if that seems applicable for the group.) For instance, in certain situations, females, blacks, physically handicapped or poor persons might be viewed as "different." Discuss some common assumptions about being different, such as "people who are different don't fit in"; or, "people who are different have to be better than others to succeed."

Discuss with your group the fact that sometimes our families or others make us aware of being different. For example, consider the assumptions hidden in the following statement:

> "At home I was told, 'You have to be better than others because you are female (or "different" in some other way).'"

Direct everyone to write a brief definition of being different. Ask them not to include their names on the paper. Collect the definitions and redistribute them so that the original writer does not receive his or her own paper.

B. RESPONDING TO DEFINITIONS: Allow time for reaction to the definitions. Pass them around a few more times to allow each person to respond to several ideas about being different.

DIRECTIONS: As you read each definition, consider the following questions:

1. Do you totally agree with the definition? Disagree?
2. Do you agree with only parts of it? Why?
3. How would you change the definition?

C. FEEDBACK/CONSENSUS DEFINITION: Elicit some common elements from the definitions. List these on the board and develop a definition of being different which is acceptable to the whole group.

D. APPLYING CONCEPTS: Select some examples of individuals or groups perceived as being different from literature, history, film or drama. Discuss these ideas:

1. In what sense are these persons different?

2. Who or what has determined the fact of their minority status (that they are different)?

3. What limitations have they experienced?

4. What victories have they achieved?

5. Are the limitations and victories related to each other? To being different? How?

E. COMPLETION: Discuss the following topic with the group: In what sense are each of us different? The leader might begin with a personal contribution, for example, "Because I have never been as talented as my sister." Each group member may make a similar contribution.

Further class discussion should focus on the following issues:

1. Is being different a personal, inner attitude, or is it imposed from the outside? Imposed by whom? By what?

2. Can you refuse to be limited by "different" status? How?

3. Choose and complete one statement that best expresses your belief:

   a. I need to be better than others because...

   b. For me, it is important to be myself because...

SECTION III

BELIEFS, VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

EXERCISE 8: LOOKING AT STEREOTYPES

PART I

GUIDELINES (A): Begin this exercise with a group discussion of stereotypes. Explain that stereotypes are popularized, erroneous ideas we have about certain groups of people. For example:

- Women are terrible drivers
- Old people are senile
- New brides can't cook
- Teenagers are irresponsible
- Men are more logical than women

Have participants list some additional stereotypes.

GUIDELINES (B): Discuss how stereotypes can be limiting to those who accept them as true, as well as to those who are the subjects of stereotypes. For example, stereotypes:

Acceptors	Subjects
Prevent you from appreciating individuals.	Prevent you from being appreciated as an individual.
Lead your thinking toward false generalizations	Can make you the victim of prejudice.
Encourages prejudice.	Can limit your actions to those described in the stereotype.

Add group ideas to both columns, using the additional stereotypes generated by the group in section (A) above.

PART II

GUIDELINES: This activity presents some specific stereotypes together with facilitation questions. Divide participants into five or six small groups. Assign one of the following statements to each group:

1. After all I've given you, you owe it to me.
2. She is just a natural mother.
3. You are acting like a typical woman (man).
4. Boys and books don't mix.
5. Men are stronger than women.
6. Marriage is closing yourself off.

DIRECTIONS: Your group will analyze the statement assigned by the leader, using the following questions. Choose one member from your group to take notes on your answers to present to the larger group at the close of discussion.

1. Who do you know that might make this kind of comment?
2. How does it make you feel?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Why?
4. How is the statement limiting to those about whom it is said?
5. How can this stereotype be disproved?

COMPLETION

A. Have the group compose a list of brief, "bumper sticker" or T-shirt statements which break a stereotype. For example, "THE HANDICAPPED CAN BE HANDY, TOO" or "A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE," might be seen on a bumper sticker.

B. To become more aware of the stereotypes supported by television commercials, have participants list those seen on one evening of television programming. For example, "Success is for the thin woman," "Diet cola puts you where you want to be" or "Men follow women with nice legs down the street" are some TV commercial stereotypes.

C. Have participants make a list of television commercials which attempt to break common stereotypes. Some examples are: a father puts a band-aid on his daughter's scraped knee, a woman executive or a man doing laundry or cooking meals.

D. Have participants make a list of any stereotypes she/he may have believed at any point in his/her life, and then consider whether those beliefs have changed and why.

EXERCISE 9: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FEMININE AND MASCULINE

PART I

GUIDELINES (A): Before meeting the group, collect a number of things similar to those listed below. These will be used to make masculine and feminine distinctions, as well as to conclude that there really are no distinctions. Some objects to collect are: cologne, mirror, Wall Street Journal, car keys, cook book, golf ball, thimble, empty beer can, apron, attache case, screwdriver, etc.

GUIDELINES (B): Display these objects so that they are visible to the group. Direct participants to consider the objects as symbols, things which have a meaning larger than the object itself. Use the following questions to analyze the symbolism:

1. What tasks or interests are suggested by each object? For example, a thimble might suggest darning socks, high fashion design or a hobby if it is part of a collection, etc.

2. In what places would you expect to find the object? For instance, you might find a thimble at home, at a museum if it is an antique, behind the scenes at a Givenchy showroom, etc.

3. What jobs or professions does each object suggest?

4. How can each object suggest both "feminine" and "masculine?"

PART II

GUIDELINES: Have participants develop masculine/feminine distinctions with the entire group or in smaller groups of five or six, by filling out the chart on the following page. This chart may be drawn on the board for the entire group, or duplicated as a handout for individual use.

	FEMININE		MASCULINE	
	HOW TO BE (feelings, attitudes, behavior)	WHAT TO DO (interests, activities, jobs)	HOW TO BE (feelings, attitudes, behavior)	WHAT TO DO (interests, activities, jobs)
My *family* says:				
Society says:				
Media says: (TV programs, advertising, magazines, books, etc.)				
I say:				

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: After discussing the distinctions which the chart sets up, direct the group discussion toward the statement: There need not be separate categories for feminine and masculine. The following questions should guide your discussion:

1. What typically feminine feelings, attitudes or behavior do you believe are acceptable for men?

2. What typically masculine feelings, attitudes or behavior do you believe are acceptable for women?

3. Do you know women whose interests, hobbies or activities are those listed under "masculine?" Is that acceptable to you? Why? Why not?

4. Do you know men whose interests, hobbies or activities are listed under "feminine?" Is that acceptable to you? Why? Why not?

5. How does your being masculine/feminine influence how you view yourself?

EXERCISE 10: THE MEANINGS OF MARRIAGE

PART I

GUIDELINES (A): This exercise begins with a survey questionnaire for participants. Located on the next page, this questionnaire may be duplicated and handed out for participants to complete. Explain that the statements in this questionnaire were made by women who were interviewed regarding the critical events in their lives. These statements represent some of their comments on marriage.

GUIDELINES (B): Conduct a group discussion of the responses to the questionnaire, and the reasons for the responses.

GUIDELINES (C): Have the group discuss each of the elements listed below, in terms of how they can add openness, dimension and freedom to a marriage. Also discuss whether these same elements could be restraining or limiting to some couples. How? Why?

careers	honesty
individuality	children
private time	hobbies
knowing the other	sexual (emotional) needs
friends	in-laws

PART II

GUIDELINES: To move the discussion into the practical aspects of marriage, the group needs to hear from married people themselves. Direct group members to prepare questions to use for a brief interview with married couples they know. Some issues raised in the survey questionnaire could be included.

STATEMENTS ABOUT MARRIAGE - QUESTIONNAIRE

The following statements represent comments made by contemporary women about marriage. Read each statement and indicate whether you 1) strongly agree, 2) agree, 3) disagree or 4) strongly disagree by placing a (✓) in the appropriate column.

	strongly agree (1)	agree (2)	disagree (3)	strongly disagree (4)
1. Women who want careers are a threat to a good marriage.				
2. Marriage means that two individuals become one.				
3. Men need their nights out "with the boys" even if they're married.				
4. "Love at first sight" is no solid basis for a marriage.				
5. In marriage, two people have each other, and that is enough.				
6. Avoid honesty if it threatens a relationship.				
7. Having children changes the whole direction of a marriage relationship.				
8. The mutual friends, hobbies and/or interests we have can add dimension and strength to a marriage.				
9. Discussing sexual (or emotional) needs is an important part of trust and sharing.				
10. The less a couple has to do with in-laws, the better their marriage will be.				

The questions should help the participants determine how various elements may be freeing or limiting within a marriage. At least three couples should be interviewed--young, middle-aged, and old. If time and energy permit, another approach would be to interview wife and husband separately and then compare information received. Both the level of note-taking skill and considerations regarding privacy may be a limitation in this activity, but it might be worthwhile to check on whether individuals and couples would object to participants taping the interviews.

DIRECTIONS: Group members should prepare a list of questions to be used for interviewing married couples, as well as lists of couples you know who would consent to being interviewed. Try to include couples from varying age groups. Once the lists have been formulated, arrive at a consensus regarding which questions you will use for the interviews, and which couples group members will interview.

Your questions can include some of the comments in the questionnaire you've completed, or the elements listed in the previous activity, or any issues which you feel are important in marriage. Some sample questions are:

1. How are the important decisions made in your marriage?

2. What causes disagreements in your marriage?

3. How do you make decisions about and divide responsibilities?

4. Have individual interests been a limiting or a helping (freeing) factor in your marriage?

5. Has having children changed your relationship? How?

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES: Using the data which participants have gathered in their interviews with married couples, consider the following in a group discussion:

1. Response similarities among age groups.
2. Response differences among age groups.
3. Limiting forces identified by married couples.
4. Elements of freedom identified by married couples.
5. Comparison of earlier discussion of group members with information supplied by married couples.

EXERCISE 11: GREAT EXPECTATIONS

PART I

GUIDELINES: Have participants discuss the statement: "Don't rock the boat; do what people (A) expect." After the discussion, have members of the group fill in the "Great Expectations" worksheet on the following page. The worksheet may be duplicated as a handout or drawn on the board as an example.

(Great Expectations Worksheet)

DIRECTIONS: On the "Great Expectations" worksheet, fill in the name of an important person in your life at the top of each working space. For example, you might include your best friend, aunt, uncle, cousin, teacher, mother, father, employer, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, etc.

In the space under each name, consider and then write what you believe that person expects of you.

After you finish writing, asterisk (*) any of the expectations in the spaces which you also have for yourself. For example: "The people for whom I babysit expect me to be responsible. That is a quality that I also expect of myself." Mark "responsible" as it appears in the space under employer with an asterisk.

Then, list all the asterisked entries under your name in the center of the worksheet. Add any other of your own "Great Expectations" which may not have already appeared on your sheet.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

ME:

GUIDELINES (B): Have participants consider the following questions, and then discuss the results of their worksheets with the total group.

1. Do any of the spaces, the important people in your life, have very similar expectations of you? Why do you think that is the case?

2. Are any sets of expectations nearly opposite? What are the reasons for this? What does this mean to you?

3. Are there very many (or very few) expectations of others which are also your own? Can you draw some conclusions from this?

COMPLETION

GUIDELINES (A): Suggest that participants spend some discussion time, if possible, with the people named on their worksheets to see if they expressed their expectations correctly.

GUIDELINES (B): The following may be included or used as a separate exercise:

Explain that expectations are part of what motivates us onward, and then have participants proceed as directed.

DIRECTIONS: Consider your future and where your expectations may lead you. Complete the following:

1. What do you learn about yourself from the expectations of others?

2. What do you learn about yourself from your own expectations?

Finally, have participants complete the following statements:

	One year from now	Five years from now
1. I will be living in (place)...		
2. I will be looking forward to...		
3. A difficulty in my life will be...		
4. My lifestyle will be (single, married)...		
5. My financial situation will be...		
6. My relationship with my friends will be...		
7. The biggest change in my personality will be that I am more...		
And less...		

CHAPTER FOUR

Learning from Your Experience

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The Critical Events Peer Interview is an activity which provides young persons an opportunity to share, with a peer, their experience of important or meaningful events in their lives. Studies of Critical Events Interview data indicate that the interview process itself enables one to draw on past experiences so as to plan for and cope with the future.

The Peer Interview also provides varied levels of learnings to the users, depending on their level of preparedness and their understanding of their own experiences. At a minimum, the process of reflecting on important past events contributes to a sense of personal history. Sharing these events with another person validates and expands experiences and feelings, allowing the participant to look back and gain the perspective of his/her experiences from a "second level."

Another level of learning concerns the participant's ability to compare past experiences and to perceive patterns of coping with events, the kinds of internal and external roadblocks encountered in working things out, and the different ways of resolving or handling the experience -- including sources of support, and effective and ineffective strategies for action.

Finally, the Critical Events Peer Interview can enable students and young persons to plan strategies for the future based on their examination of past critical events. Our personal view of past experiences in the areas of relationships, education, work and health as well as those events more personal in nature, shape the future course of our lives. By focusing on the various aspects of experience, the participant can

begin to perceive these areas of life in terms of goals and strategies for future achievement based on principles of independence and self determination.

Some practical benefits from the interview process relate to developing skills in analysis, speaking, listening and confidentiality. The one who is being interviewed, the Speaker, looks back into the past to select one critical event and to talk about how she/he responded, felt, and handled it, as well as how he/she may have been changed by the experience.

The Listener has the opportunity to see how another person has reacted to events in her/his life. Having to make a conscious effort to be quiet and listen, or ask supportive questions, gives the Listener insights into his or her ordinary listening behavior, perhaps indicating how she/he interrupts friends when they are speaking. Writing down the responses sharpens the Listener's accuracy in dealing with information.

For both Speaker and Listener, a concern with confidentiality increases their ability to trust and be trusted, and their discretion in understanding different levels of trust appropriate for different situations.

The interview process is one which, once learned, may be used at any time by the participant. It is exceptionally useful at those times when one is faced with difficult decisions regarding the course of one's life.

Understanding that each participant will have a different experience with the Critical Events Peer Interview, it is suggested that the Interview be used in conjunction with at least some of the other activities provided in this book. In addition, several completion activities have been outlined at the end of this chapter which suggest various ways to examine the Interview results and enhance the participant's experience with this activity.

Some participants may not wish to share a particular event with a peer. In such cases, the Interview can be completed by the participants individually (Self Interview). However, it is important that the participants are clear about the purpose of the interview and how to complete the form. It is also recommended that participants do some completion activities after the interview either by writing their responses or sharing in class or with the leader.

This Interview has been designed for use by students, community groups, Scouts, families, etc. It is appropriate for classes in social studies, psychology, drama, English and history, as well as a variety of community settings.

The Critical Events Peer Interview can also be used by counselors. Guidelines for using the Interview in a counseling context are presented in The Critical Events Interview Training Manual, currently being prepared for publication. Counselors using the Interview might want to adapt it for group counseling using some of the suggested activities outlined under Part IV: Completion.

PART II: CLASS/GROUP PRESENTATION - PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Before using this activity with any group, teachers and other group leaders should familiarize themselves with the purpose and structure of the Critical Events Peer Interview. Once you feel comfortable with this activity, there are some basic issues you will need to discuss with your group before beginning the interviews.

The following guidelines are intended to both familiarize leaders with the interview process and to aid group leaders in formulating a presentation of this activity for class or group members. Each participant should have a clear understanding of the interview process, confidentiality priviledge and any completion activities you wish to propose before beginning the interviews.

WHAT IS THE CRITICAL EVENTS PEER INTERVIEW?

You may want to prepare some introductory remarks for your group based on Part I: Introduction. The task here is to tell the group about the basic interview process, it's purpose and perhaps some information regarding the Critical Events Interview study discussed in Chapter I. You might also include a brief discussion of why you chose this activity as well as what you hope to accomplish in using this material with your group.

The following pages have been prepared to facilitate your presentation of the Critical Events Peer Interview. Some or all of these pages may be duplicated ahead of time and distributed to participants after you've completed any introductory remarks you wish to present. After allowing time for group members to read these materials, you may begin a step-by-step discussion of how the interview is done. If you decide not to duplicate these pages as a handout, just continue the presentation as it has been outlined, making sure participants are clear about each step of the process. However, it is suggested that all participants receive the Sample Interview Sheet with Explanation of Questions, as well as the Directions for Speaker/Directions for Listener pages.

HOW TO DO THE CRITICAL EVENTS PEER INTERVIEW

An interview is a process wherein one person asks another a set of questions designed to elicit some particular information. This interview focuses on special or important events that you have experienced at some time in your past. You will share various aspects of your experiences with someone else in your group, so that you will be the Speaker and your partner, the Listener. You can then trade roles and interview your partner.

CHOOSING AN EVENT

A critical event or experience is one which you feel was important, special or crucial in forming the person you are today. Such experiences may have been happy or sad occasions, events which you feel changed you in some way, or even an activity such as reading a special book or learning to play baseball. You might choose an event pertaining to a relationship, a school or work experience, something related to your health or the health of someone close to you, or some other personal matter. An event could also be a realization you've had, something that happened <u>within</u> you rather than <u>to</u> you.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

Before the interview, the Listener is given an Interview Sheet which has six questions about the critical event or experience you choose to talk about. Your teacher or group leader has provided for you a Sample Interview Sheet that includes an explanation of the questions and some ways to reflect on how you might answer them. Study the Sample Interview Sheet carefully; your teacher or group leader can discuss any questions you may have about how to use it.

HOW IS THE INTERVIEW DONE?

Before beginning the Critical Events Peer Interview, make sure you have a quiet space for conducting the interview and several Interview Sheets to write on. You may use extra paper if needed. If you haven't already done so, try to take some time before the interview to decide which events or experiences you would like to talk about. Following are some special instructions for both the Speaker and the Listener.

DIRECTIONS FOR SPEAKER

Choose just one event to talk about for each Interview Sheet used. Concentrate on the questions being asked by the Listener, and try to respond to them as best you can. If you don't want to respond to a particular question, tell the Listener to go on to the next one. Stick to the questions asked without wandering off to another subject. There is no hurry, take your time, give the Listener enough time to write down your responses.

After the Interview, check the Interview Sheet with your partner to make sure everything has been written down. If you do more than one Interview (event), go throught them chronologically by the year in which the event happened, and number your pages accordingly.

DIRECTIONS FOR LISTENER

Once the Speaker has chosen an event or experience to talk about, you may begin the Interview. Start by asking the first question on the Interview Sheet and proceed until all questions have been answered. Give the Speaker plenty of time to respond to the question. If the Speaker chooses not to respond to a certain question, just write down "no response" on the Interview Sheet.

Try to remember that it is your turn to <u>listen</u>. Don't interrupt the Speaker, suggest answers or make any judgments about what you've heard. Your task is to write down the Speaker's responses just as she/he has given them to you, without editing or re-wording. You may ask the Speaker to talk more slowly if necessary.

After the Interview, check to make sure you've written everything down. If more than one event is discussed, remember to keep them on separate Interview Sheets.

NAME_____
DATE_____

SAMPLE INTERVIEW SHEET/EXPLANATION OF QUESTIONS

NAME OF EVENT_____
DATE OF EVENT_____

1. WHAT WAS THE EVENT/EXPERIENCE?

(Describe the critical event or experience you have chosen to talk about. Try to include the who, what, where, when and how of the event if these are relevant.)

2. HOW DID YOU FEEL THEN? WHAT DID YOU THINK?

(Distinguish between how you felt about what happened from what you thought about it. Describe these feelings and thoughts.)

3. WHAT DID YOU DO?

(What action did you take? Did you do something about it on your own or did you try to get help from someone else? Maybe you didn't do anything except try to sit it out. Describe what you did.)

4. WHO/WHAT HELPED OR HURT?

(Who and what helped you to work this out? Who and what made it difficult for you to work this out? Try to include whatever actions, attitudes or emotional support helped and hindered you. Did you have to give up anything?)

5. WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF?

(Does the event seem different now than it did then? How? How were you changed by the event? What adjectives describe you then and now?)

6. NAME THE EVENT.

(Just like giving a title to a movie or story, try to name the event or experience using a word or short phrase.)

CONFIDENTIALITY

When people share material which is personal in nature, the issue of confidentiality must be considered. One way to think about this is to imagine the concept of confidentiality as it has been used in doctor-patient, therapist-client or lawyer-client relationships. There must be a basic level of trust established between the person disclosing personal information (the Speaker) and the Listener.

When choosing an event or experience to talk about, consider whether you will feel comfortable talking about it to another person. If you think something might come up that you are uneasy in talking about, you may want to choose another event/experience.

If it is your turn to be the Listener, you must agree that any information disclosed in the interview is to remain confidential, unless agreed to otherwise by the Speaker. Remember that you will also be sharing personal information when it is your turn to be interviewed. Give the Speaker the same consideration you'd like to have. Your group leader will discuss this issue further and establish some ground rules before the interviews begin.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS

Once the interview activities have been completed, you will be given an opportunity to discuss with the group what you thought about interviewing, being interviewed and what you learned about yourself from the interview experience. Your teacher or group leader will offer some suggestions regarding how to "read" or interpret the Interview Sheets which allow you to get the most out of this experience. In addition, your teacher/leader may offer some creative ways to use the interview data as resource material.

PART III: DOING THE INTERVIEW

Prepare the participants at least a day before the interviews are to be conducted. Presenting the interview directions in advance will give the Speaker and the Listener time to think about what it means to be a good listener, to determine an appropriate level of confidentiality, and to choose events/experiences to talk about in the interview.

You will need to decide ahead of time the number of events each participant should be prepared to discuss. While this will depend greatly on the time you have available for this activity, it is suggested that each participant do a minimum of two events. This allows participants to do one interview to become familiar with the actual procedure, and another interview once they feel comfortable with it.

Another strategy to familiarize participants with the actual process is to role-play an interview with either another teacher/leader or one of the participants, before the entire group. The advantage to this method is that participants might think of questions about unclear procedures before the actual interviews begin. After the role-play presentation, you can spend some time answering any questions that come up.

You should also determine ahead of time some ground rules regarding confidentiality. Each participant should be very clear about the confidential nature of any information provided in the interviews. Inform the group if you intend to collect the Interview Sheets when they are completed. Your choice of Completion activities will also have a bearing on the question of confidentiality. These activities should be reviewed before you determine confidentiality groundrules. You might want to discuss this issue with your group in order to get a consensus decision regarding confidentiality.

Another option for this activity is the Self Interview. You may want to use this option with the entire group if your time is restricted, or only with participants who prefer not to talk about their experiences with a peer. If you decide to use

the Self Interview, the basic guidelines for the Peer Interview can be used with the exception that participants will fill out the Interview Sheets themselves. Completion activities can be adapted for those using the Self Interview option.

Finally, you will need to determine a method for pairing participants for the interviews. One consideration is that a participant might feel comfortable with some peers, uncomfortable with others. For example, girls might not want to do the interview with boys or vice-versa. You can best decide how to handle this. However, if it is feasible, you might let participants choose their own partners.

On the day the interview will be done, review all directions, repeat the ground rules for confidentiality, and then make certain all participants are ready to begin. Have plenty of Interview Sheets available.

The interview itself will take a minimum of twenty minutes to complete per event. This includes about five minutes at the end for the Listener to check back with the Speaker on the accuracy of his/her written report. The time is flexible and can be adjusted in terms of your schedule. However, it is important not to rush the Speaker.

You will also want to set aside some time after the interviews for a general discussion of the interview experience and for processing this activity. If you are planning to do more than one critical event or before changing roles, allow additional time to make certain any problems or questions are addressed.

The ideal setting for the interview is a completely private space for each pair of participants. If this is not possible, make maximum use of corners, halls, etc. Before beginning the interviews, distribute at least one Interview Sheet (one is needed per event) and some extra paper in case there is too much material to put on the Interview Sheet. The Interview Sheet is the next page, and can be duplicated for participants' use.

NAME _____
DATE _____

NAME OF EVENT _____
DATE OF EVENT _____

INTERVIEW SHEET

1. WHAT WAS THE EVENT/EXPERIENCE?

2. HOW DID YOU FEEL THEN? WHAT DID YOU THINK?

3. WHAT DID YOU DO?

4. WHO/WHAT HELPED OR HURT?

5. WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF?

6. NAME THE EVENT.

PART IV: COMPLETION ACTIVITIES

After your group ~~has completed one or pre~~ferably several interviews, you can begin a group discussion of their interview experience. The following activities can be adapted to your group, or you might develop some activities of your own, or even ask participants what they'd like to do after the interviews.

EVALUATING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Direct a group discussion about the interview process. Try to elicit participants' reaction to this experience, including what they thought about it and how they felt doing it. The following questions may help to direct discussion from both the Speaker and Listener viewpoints.

Discussion from Speaker Viewpoint:

1. What did you think about the interviews? How did it feel to be interviewed?

2. How did it feel to talk about personal events or experiences? Was it easy for you? Difficult?

3. What questions were easiest to answer? Which ones were most difficult?

4. What did you learn about yourself by doing the interview? About the kind of person you are? About how you cope with or handle certain events or experiences?

Discussion from Listener Viewpoint:

1. How did it feel to do the interviewing? To just listen and write notes?

2. What was it like to listen to someone disclosing personal information? How did you feel hearing about someone else's life, their experiences, thoughts and feelings?

3. Can you think of any new skills you may have learned by being the Listener? If so, how might you continue to develop or improve those skills?

As an option, participants might write down their answers or discussion of these questions as an essay or an evaluation of the interview process.

LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES

Now is the time to take a closer look at the interview data. Participants should be directed to read over their own Interview Sheets to discover some general patterns in their experiences. The more events/experiences each participant has discussed, the more valuable this activity will be.

Begin this activity with a discussion related to the concept of personal history. Explain to the group that the events/experiences they've talked about should not be seen as isolated occurrences, but as part of their own history. Reflecting on special or important events such as these help us to see the persons we are.

By looking at patterns in the events and how participants felt about them, how they coped with them (including sources of support and resolving the event), participants can become more aware of the qualities that contributed to their own identities. They can evaluate what works for them, the persons and actions which are most supportive in terms of successful resolution of events. Personal realizations about these experiences can aid participants in planning for the future, as well as the successful resolution of future critical events.

In looking for patterns, participants can consider other critical events in their lives which they chose not to talk about during the interviews. It might be helpful if they made a list of these additional events simply by naming them as they did on the Interview Sheet, Question #6. Participants can focus a pattern search on the following areas:

Events

What kinds of events did you choose to talk about? Were they related to work or school experiences, to relationships, health or other personal concerns? What does your choice of events mean to you in terms of the areas in your life that have had the most impact on how you view yourself?

Feelings and Thoughts

Are there any patterns you can see in your feelings or emotional responses? What about your thinking? Do you usually take time to think things through? Discuss how your thoughts and feelings can limit what you choose to do or to become.

Actions

Do you usually try to do something about your events or experiences to improve the outcome? Can you establish some circumstances when it is best to act quickly, or others when it is best to "sit it out" and do nothing? Can you make some distinctions regarding which kinds of actions usually worked best for you and which ones weren't very effective? Do you look at alternative actions and realize that you are making choices?

Sources of Support/Roadblocks to Resolution

Can you distinguish between those actions or people that you viewed as being helpful for you and those that seemed to impede your efforts to work things out? What about your attitudes--are they helpful? Or do you allow them to hinder your progress? Do you often have to compromise in order to work things out? How might compromise be used toward your advantage?

Learning from Your Experiences

Do you learn anything from your experiences (whether good or bad) that you can use in working out future events? Or do you often make the same mistakes in similar situations? How can you learn from your past, to plan for and cope with the future?

PLANNING STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Participants can begin to assess their past, to plan strategies for coping with critical events likely to occur in the future. Following are some activities related to this process:

1. Make a list of possible future critical events. For example, your list might include getting married, becoming a parent, your first job, moving away from home, or the illness or death of a parent.

2. Choose one critical event from your list and describe how you might handle it on the basis of the patterns you've noticed in how you've handled events in the past. Next, describe how you might want to handle it differently from how you've handled past events.

3. Make a list of things you've found helpful in resolving past events on one side of a sheet of paper. This list should include the names of people you could count on, places you could go for information or support, attitudes that helped and strategies for action. Also include those things or people that you feel might have been helpful or might be helpful in the future.

4. On the other side of this sheet of paper, list all those things or people which you feel made it difficult for you to work things out, or that you want to avoid in the future. Save your lists--use them the next time a critical event or experience happens in your life. As you get older, you will probably add things which work best for you, based on your own experiences.

In addition to interview material being valuable in terms of participants becoming more aware of various aspects of their experiences as individuals, the interview material can also be used to discover general patterns for groups. You might ask participants to complete other interviews with different people (family or friends) in order to compare the experiences of others with their own experiences.

After you have collected a number of interviews, there are many different things you can do with the material. Bearing in mind whatever level of confidentiality you have set for your group, you may choose any of the following suggestions, or ask participants for their own ideas.

Looking at the information you have collected, what can you tell about these people? Could you write stories about them, or plays? Perhaps each individual could use his/her own interviews to write an autobiography, or give a speech.

The Critical Events Peer Interview can be used in the areas of Psychology, Social Studies, History, Speech, English, Drama and Counseling. Some specific uses are presented for your consideration. However, feel free to make up some of your own.

Psychology

The development of identity: how individuals perceive their own growth. What are some general patterns of growth for this group? You may want to use this as material on young adulthood.

Social Studies

Tabulate the events cited by the individuals in your group by categories. Here are some possibilities, although you may find others in your data:

Relationships
Education
Health/Body image
Work
Personal growth

After you have grouped your data into categories, look for other patterns that you might use to chart development in regard to the critical events that have shaped participants' lives.

1. What type of events are most common?

2. Is there a difference in type of event cited by males and females? According to years lived in this community? According to ethnicity? To race? Whether the person has lived with one or two parents?

3. Make charts and tables that show these relationships. Develop a questionnaire on the demographics of your group and chart the frequency of events for each major demographic factor. You might want to find another population (perhaps another Social Studies class) and compare your charts with theirs.

4. Learn about stereotypes: using only the interview data, what stereotypes (subtle or direct) can you develop? Discuss the limitations and dangers of stereotypes. You can ask the group to compile a group list of stereotypes and then have them respond to one or all of these beliefs. (See Chapter III, Exercise 8: What Are Stereotypes.)

History

After participants have completed several events each, they could use this material to develop an oral history. The value of oral history is that it represents the lives and culture of a group of people. The interview material

represents both the personal history of the participants who experienced the events, and the collective history of the group.

Speech, English and Drama

Critical Events Peer Interview material may provide background for essays and speeches. Several topics are presented in Chapter II, Topics for Creative Expression, which might assist participants in writing or speaking further about what they learned from the interview.

Some of the situations described lend themselves well to dramatization. Participants may want to work the material up individually, or as a group project. For example, a group of participants might portray an event in a family either the way it happened from the Speaker's perspective, or how it might have worked out differently.

REFERENCES

Avery, Donna M., "Understanding Identity Through Critical Events." Paper presented at American Psychological Association, 1980.

Critical Events Shaping Woman's Identity: A Handbook For The Helping Professions, Chicago State University. Produced under a grant from the U.S. Education Department, Women's Educational Equity Act Program. Newton, Mass.: Education Development Center, 1980.